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Importance of Spanish to the American Citizen

By

JOHN D. FITZ-GERALD, Ph.D.

University of Illinois



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IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

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American Interest in Things Spanish

The United States has always been able to boast that some of its prominent men were actively interested in Spain. This has effectively prevented the public in general from losing entirely its interest in the Iberian Peninsula. We can point in our early days to Washington Irving, who, while United States Minister at Madrid, took occasion to steep himself in the romantic legends of early Spain and gave us his beautiful *Tales of the Alhambra*. These legends, curiously enough, had never before gotten into print in any language. The Spaniards themselves appreciate Irving's interest and were the first to recognize the service he had done them in thus calling attention thereto.

Later William Hickling Prescott, with his *Life of Philip II*, George Ticknor, with his *History of Spanish Literature*, Longfellow, with his *Spanish Student*, and John Hay, with his *Castilian Days*, have constantly fanned the flame of our affection. Still more recently historians have been giving us new cause for inter-

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

est in, and gratitude toward, the Land of the Dons. We have long known what we owed to France for aid during our Revolution. We have not known much about our debt to Spain at that time, and yet that debt was considerable. Among other things Spain lent us over a million dollars; she granted our privateersmen refuge in all her harbors; she permitted the purchase of supplies by the exchange of commodities; and at New Orleans, Pensacola, and Havana she showed us unusual privileges, permitting us to maintain at New Orleans a Special Commissioner, Mr. Pollock, who purchased ammunition and provisions which were sent up the Mississippi and the Ohio, and so eastward to our troops. During the whole of the war Spain maintained an agent at Philadelphia for the purpose of watching events. Last, but not least, the Count of Aranda, Spanish Ambassador at Paris, as early as March, 1775, suggested to the French government joint intervention by France and Spain in the approaching trouble between England and the Colonies.

In spite of all this, when mention is made of Spain, it has been the habit for many years past, both in this country and in Europe, to shrug the shoulders and, with Nicholas Masson de Morvilliers, to ask: "But, what do we owe to Spain? And during the last two centuries, the last four, the last six, what has she done for Europe?" The implication is only too plain. It is, however, entirely erroneous. It has been the custom to consider Spain as a country of barbarians, and this has led to the statement, often heard, that "Africa really begins at the Pyrenees". In this statement there is just enough truth to make the half lie more dangerous than an out-and-out misstatement would have been. Persons with that idea in mind show their own ignorance of the history of Spain from its earliest times to the present day, or else they forget some very obvious facts.

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

Silver Latin in Spain

Consider what Silver Latin would amount to without the Rhetorician Seneca the Elder (born at Córdoba, B. C. 60), without his son, the Philosopher and Dramaturge Seneca the Younger (born at Córdoba, B. C. 3), without the Poet Lucan, grandson and nephew, respectively, of the two Senecas (born at Córdoba, A. D. 39), and without the *Epigrams* of Martial (born near Calatayud, A. D. 43), and the *Institutes of Oratory* and the *Maxims* of Quintilian (born at Calahorra, A. D. 35). There were also Pomponius Mela (who was born at Tingentera, Spain, and flourished under Caligula and Claudius) and Columella (a contemporary of Seneca, and born at Cadiz). And still later we find Prudentius, the earliest of the Christian poets (said to have been born at Tarragona, A. D. 348); Isidor of Seville (died 636), who, next to Boethius and Cassiodorus, exercised the most important influence upon the general culture and literature of the Middle Ages, and whose greatest work was his *Etymologiae* or *Origines*; and Teodolfo, Spanish Bishop of Orleans, famous in the Court of Charlemagne as a poet and littérateur, and whose name will be held in remembrance until his triumphant hymn *Gloria, laus et honor* ceases to be sung throughout the whole world on Palm Sunday.

Lexicography and Grammar

We have spoken of Spanish literature, so far as it concerned Silver Latin, but that was not its only period of importance. As early as 1427 Spain possessed complete translations of Virgil and Dante, both due to the pen of Don Enrique de Villena. Alonso de Palencia produced in 1490 the earliest Latin dictionary with definitions in Spanish. It was driven from the field in 1492 by another due to Don Antonio de Nebrija. In 1610 Covarrubias wrote the first dictionary in any modern language. In 1739 the

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

Spanish Royal Academy completed in six volumes its *Dictionary of the Spanish Language*, and there was no dictionary in any other modern language to be compared to it. These matters of translations and lexicography may justly be said not to belong to literature, properly so-called; but in creative work also Spain can well hold her own.

Early Spanish Literature

About 1120 there was written the *Auto de los Reyes Magos*, the earliest play at present known in any modern literature. Despite its early date, its construction shows real action and keen psychology.

The Cid Campeador, national hero of Spain, died in 1099. By 1140 the *Poema del Cid* or *Cantar de Mio Cid* was composed. It is one of the few great epic poems of modern times and shows a unity of conception and a sobriety of expression that makes it superior to some of the national epics of other lands.

The first Spanish poet whose name we know, is Gonzalo de Berceo, who flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century. His didactic works written in the form of verse known as the *Cuaderna Vía* constitute a dignified volume of material. To the same century belong the legal and astronomical works produced by Alfonso the Wise or under his leadership. At about 1300 we find the first real novel, the *Libro del Cavallero Cifar*.

Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest of Hita, flourished in the first half of the fourteenth century and earned the title of "Spanish Chaucer" with his great satirical poem *El Libro de Buen Amor*. A contemporary of Juan Ruiz was Juan Manuel, who brought into Spanish literature the Oriental Tales and Apologues in his *Libro de los Exemplos del Conde Lucanor*, written about 1342. The Jewish Rabbi Sem Tob de Carrión was one of the favorites of Peter the Cruel. He left us his important collection of poems,

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

under the caption *Proverbios Morales*, which gives us our first example in Spanish literature of the versified epigram. The Chancellor Pedro López de Ayala gives us a very keen analysis of court life in his long poem entitled *Rimado de Palacio*.

To the fifteen century belongs the Spanish *Danza de la Muerte*. In several important respects this is a more interesting version of the Dance of Death than is to be found in any other literature.

The Literary Court of Juan II of Castile

The literary court of Juan II of Castile (1419-1454) produced a brilliant galaxy of prose writers and poets. The works of some sixty poets are represented in the celebrated *Cancionero de Baena*. Among the most important of the writers of this period we must mention the prosodian Enrique de Villena, who made one of the earliest, if not indeed the earliest, complete translation of the *Aeneid* into any foreign language, and who was the first to make Dante available for his contemporaries. Nor should we forget such writers as Juan de Mena (1411-1456) with his *Las Trezientas*; the great portraitist Fernán Pérez de Guzmán (?1376-?1458), called the Spanish Plutarch because of his vivid *Generaciones y Semblanzas*; the latter's nephew, the versatile and distinguished Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458) with his sonorous *Diálogo de Bías contra Fortuna* and his mordant attack upon Álvaro de Luna in the *Doctrinal de Privados*; Alfonso Martínez de Toledo (?1398-?1470), the Archpriest of Talavera, whose great satirical work, called by his own title *Arcipreste de Talavera*, has been rechristened by the public, which calls it *El Corbacho*; Jorge Manrique (1440-1478) with his exquisite *Coplas de Jorge Manrique por la muerte de su padre*; the first great Romance of Chivalry, *Amadis de Gaula*, and its incredible progeny, including the *Passo honroso de Suero de Quiñones*, an

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

authentic account of a tourney that shows the ordinary Romance of Chivalry to be only a pale reflex of the real thing, instead of a wild exaggeration; and the various *Romanceros* that began to be collected at this time, and that show Spain to have been more productive in this field than was either Scotland or England. Toward the end of this century and running into the XVIth we find the works of the musician-playwright Juan del Encina (1469-?1533), the "patriarch of the Spanish stage", of whom there survive many lyrics, an important "theatre", and a good body of musical compositions.

Political Extent and Importance of Spain in the Golden Age

In the heyday of her Golden Age Spain was foremost in many things. Under the Emperor Charles V and his son Philip II her dominions formed one of the greatest empires the world had ever seen, and the greatest empire then extant. It embraced the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily and Sardinia, the Duchy of Milan, all of Navarre, Roussillon, Franche-Comté, Luxemburg, Artois, Flanders, and the Netherlands, all the Kingdoms of Spain, all of Portugal, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, the Azores, the Madeira Islands, the Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese West India, Portuguese and Spanish possessions in Africa, all of South America, all of Central America, all of the West Indies, and in North America, Florida and much of our South and Southwest, the Caroline Islands, the Ladrones, and the Philippines, the Spice Islands, and all of those parts of the East Indies, Australia, and New Zealand that belonged to Portugal or Holland. And for a while, too, Philip was even King Consort of England. The Spanish navy, with its victory over the Turks at the battle of Lepanto, 1571, proved itself to be, as it had long been credited with being, the greatest navy that had ever plowed the main. The Spanish

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

infantry was confessedly the finest in Europe. Spanish industries and products were known the world around. Houter in his *Declamatio Panegyrica in laudem Hispaniae* (1545) said: "Of all the nations of Europe, Spain furnishes us with most of every kind of commodity. She sends us so much wool that Bruges alone receives every year 36,000 to 40,000 bales." Shortly before this date Spain was one of the leading wheat-producing countries of the world. She was famous for metal-working, cordage and shipbuilding; while silk weaving, fine fabrics, linens, and gloves were really national industries. And who has not heard of the exquisite silver filigree work of Córdoba, and of Córdoba leather, to say nothing of the famous Toledo swords and daggers?

But this supremacy in territory, political power, commerce, and industry began to diminish as soon as it reached its maximum. The defeat of the Armada in 1588 wrecked the Spanish naval supremacy. The defeat of the Spanish troops by young Condé at the battle of Rocroi in 1643 was the deathblow to Spain's military prestige. The expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609 and 1610, and a vicious system of embargos and taxation to support the foreign wars destroyed agriculture, commerce, and industry by the middle of the seventeenth century. This produced its counter effect on military operations.

In 1640 Portugal recovered her independence, although Spain refused to recognize the fact until 1668. This deprived Spain of the enormous holdings of Portugal in India, Africa, and South America.

The Treaty of Münster (1648) recognized the independence of Holland, Zealand, etc., under the title of The United Netherlands. With them went all the vast Dutch possessions overseas.

Roussillon and Artois were lost by the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659; and Franche-Comté was ceded to France by the Treaty

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

of Nimeguen in 1678; while Luxemburg went the same way by the terms of the Treaty of Ratisbon in 1684.

While the next great loss took place after the period of which we have been speaking, it was so directly a product of conditions that obtained in the Golden Age, that we are going to mention it here. We refer to the Treaty of Rastadt, 1714, by which Spain lost Flanders, Brabant, etc., known as the Spanish Netherlands, the Duchy of Milan, and the Kingdoms of Sardinia, Naples and Sicily. Spain thus stands stripped of all her European possessions that lay outside the boundaries of what we now call Spain, and with those possessions went all the overseas possessions belonging thereto.

Spanish Literature of the Golden Age

But this is not the whole story, and the part that remains to be told is glorious. Ranking in reputation for scholarship and for numbers with the Universities of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford stand those of Salamanca and Alcalá, in the latter of which was prepared the great Complutensian Polyglot Bible, due to the common labors of the leading scholars, both Jews and Christians. Luis Vives, the Valencian humanist, carried Spanish learning to England, where he lived for many years as Fellow at Oxford.

Europe had not yet recovered from the wave of translation and imitation caused by that great book, the *Comedia* or *Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea* (more often called the *Celestina*, because of its principal character), when she was set afire anew by an equally anonymous work, the first and greatest of the picaresque novels, the *Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, the first known editions of which are of 1554. The great picaresque genre had thus been inaugurated and it had a numerous descent, only a few of which can be mentioned: Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), Quevedo's *Historia de la Vida del Buscón* (1626), and

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

Guevara's *Diablo Cojuelo* (1641). These works were not without influence in other literatures, either through imitation or translation, especially in France and England. Nor should we overlook the pastoral novels, as represented by Cervantes' *Galatea*, Lope de Vega's *Arcadia*, Gaspar Mercader's *Prado de Valencia*, and the series of *Dianas* by various authors.

Lyric poetry flourished, and side by side with it went the incredible development of the Spanish theatre, which, because it refused to be bound by the so-called Aristotelian unities, was enabled to make itself really national, and exert a profound influence upon English and French dramatic productivity. It will doubtless be recalled that in France the first great tragedy and the first great comedy are built on Spanish originals: Corneille's *Le Cid*, adapted from *Las Mocedades del Cid* of Guillén de Castro; and Corneille's *Le Menteur*, made on Alarcón's *La Verdad Sospechosa*. To say nothing of the host of minor writers, we find at our immediate disposal such men as Lope de Vega (with 1800 plays and more than 400 autos, of which 470 plays and 50 autos survive), Tirso de Molina (with 400 plays, of which 80 survive, among them the original of the entire Don Juan cycle in all literature, *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra*), Moreto, Alarcón (with a literary baggage of somewhat less than thirty plays, but the only author of front rank who took care to polish what he wrote and who, although he never rises quite as high as the others, has left no line that is unworthy of him), and Calderón (the most representative, the most philosophical, and the most lyrical of all the great Spanish dramatists, of whose works we possess about 120 pieces, 80 autos, 20 entremeses, jácaras, etc.).

And still we have not mentioned a work which is not only the great book in Spanish literature, but, after the Bible, the greatest single book in the world: *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

While this book has been one of Spain's greatest glories, its fame abroad has indirectly done its author and Spain serious harm. So much has *Don Quijote* overshadowed the other works of Cervantes that few persons even among the élite realize that if Cervantes had never written *Don Quijote* he would still be Spain's greatest novelist because of his twelve scintillating *Novelas Ejemplares*. In similar fashion *Don Quijote* has so overshadowed all the rest of Spanish literature that many persons, even among those of more than average culture, still speak of Spanish literature as a literature consisting of just one book: *Don Quijote*, and I have myself heard that argument at least twenty times in the last two weeks in the mouths of educators who are administrators of schools or of school systems and who cannot see anything but a commercial reason for the present vogue of Spanish.

Spanish Art in the Golden Age

The art of this Golden Age in Spain was equally glorious, as witness the telling studies in emaciation and drab that we owe to the brush of Zurbarán, or the marvelous technique of the portraits and battle scenes with which Velázquez endowed the world, or the colorful canvasses of Ribera and Carreño, or the lovely Madonnas for whose painting Murillo seems to have stolen Heaven's own hues. But Murillo represented in Spanish art the moment when the rose reaches its full bloom, and as happens with the rose when that moment is reached, so Spanish art began its immediate withering and decay, for Murillo's successors, lacking his inspiration, could produce only inspid imitations, however perfect in mechanical detail.

So it happened, also, in the field of letters. With Calderón the zenith of development was reached, and rapid was the descent into the dreary waste of an uncreative period. With the extinc-

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

tion of the House of Hapsburg in 1700 came the Wars of the Spanish Succession and the accession of the first of the Bourbons, Philip V. This inaugurated a period of slavish imitation of foreign models and for over a hundred years there are no names that need detain us.

The Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century

Despite her internal troubles during the first half of the nineteenth century, there were here and there signs of a real renaissance, and before the end of the century it had made itself felt all along the line. The Spanish drama, the novel, lyric poetry, humanistic studies, and the fine arts had all come into their own once more.

Sculpture shows such names as Benlliure (with nearly a dozen statues in Madrid alone), Suñol, Marinas, and Mora (who created one of the best monuments for the tercentenary of Cervantes' death, a monument that stands in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco). Painting conferred upon the world such names as Fortuny, the brilliant Madrazo family of portrait painters (six of them in three generations), and the greatest of living painters today: Zuloaga, the cynic, hard and cold, but exquisite master of technique; and above all Sorolla, the warm-hearted and radiant, whose canvasses fill our souls with sunshine and joy.

The greatest humanist in the world in the nineteenth century was Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, professor at the University of Madrid for twenty years, and thereafter until his death National Librarian. His insatiable appetite for books is well expressed in the phrase that was often used concerning his activity as National Librarian: "He did not administer the National Library, he read it." In his life there merged two distinct streams of literary investigation: the philosophico-historical and the philo-

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

logico-historical, and of both streams there flows out from him a worthy continuation: for the latter, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, the greatest Romance Philologist Spain has yet produced; and for the former Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, a prolific writer with a mind that may fairly be called encyclopaedic.

Even science shows an awakening and the world recognizes its leading histologist in the person of Santiago Ramón y Cajal. That biologists think highly of Angel Cabrera Latorre (youngest son of the late Bishop of the Spanish Reformed Church, Juan B. Cabrera) is evident from the fact that when despite his youth he was sent by his government to a recent international congress of biologists held under the patronage of the Prince of Monaco, the delegates elected him chairman of the section on mammals.

Lyric Poetry

Lyric poetry flourished. Early in the twentieth century Juan Valera compiled a *Florilegio de Poesías Castellanas del Siglo XIX* (five volumes, with an historical introduction and biographical and critical notes), in which he gives us poems by one hundred and fifty-two poets, with excessive modesty omitting anything of his own. Lyric poetry is the most difficult form of literature to reproduce in translation. Consequently little of this part of nineteenth century Spanish literature is available for those of our compatriots who do not read Spanish, and yet I am sure that the majority of those who read Spanish must enjoy the works of such writers as the Duque de Rivas (one of the founders of Romanticism in Spain), Espronceda, Zorilla (the author of the revised version of the ballads dealing with the Cid Campeador), the dainty Cuban poetess Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (whose sonnet to Washington is one of the finest tributes that has ever been paid to "the father of his country"), the tender,

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

melancholy Becquer, Campoamor (the author of the exquisite *Doloras*), Núñez de Arce (with his stirring *Gritos del Combate* and *¡Sursum Corda!*), and the sweet singer of nature's beauties (*El Huracán* and *Niágara*), the lonely Cuban exile José María de Heredia.

The Modern Drama

The drama has shown an equally vigorous life at home and a more widespread influence abroad. Moratín the younger in 1806 sounded a blast in favor of the feminist movement, with his rollicking *El Sí de las Niñas*, in which he made, without preachment, a serious attack on the general training given to young girls. To Zorrilla we owe the rejuvenation of the Don Juan legend, for at the Hallowe'en season his play *Don Juan Tenorio* is performed during two weeks to crowded houses in practically every theatre in the country. Tamayo y Baus produced a splendid and not too bulky set of plays, one of which, the *Drama Nuevo*, is one of the great plays of all literature. As a play within a play it has never been surpassed in its welding together of the two sets of characters. Some years ago it was adapted into English for Augustin Daly, under the title *Yorick's Love*; and recently The Hispanic Society has published an exact translation of the original, according to the Spanish Academy's official edition. Angel Guimerá, the Catalan, is perhaps the most virile dramatist in Spain today. His *Terra Baixa* has been translated into Serbian, Italian, French, and Spanish, in the latter of which it went through Cuba, Mexico, and South America, and Mrs. Fiske produced it some years ago (1903) in this country under the title *Marta of the Lowlands*. Pérez Galdós, although primarily a novelist, has frequently been successful with dramas that are keen studies of contemporary conditions in Spain. His *The Grandfather* (a dialogued novel) and *Electra* are both available in English. Echegaray, the mathema-

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

tician, civil engineer, statesman, cabinet minister (a man cast in much the same mold as our own beloved Hopkinson Smith), was also a dramatist and justified that title by producing about seventy plays. In 1904 he was awarded one-half the Nobel Prize for the ideal in literature (the other half going to the poet of Provence, Frédéric Mistral). He earned the award by several ideal works. *El Gran Galeoto* has been translated into several languages, and is familiar to us in English through several translations and through the adaptation performed by Mr. William Faversham and his wife, Miss Julie Opp, under the title of *The World and His Wife*. *O locura o santidad* is available in English under the title *Madman or Saint*, and of *El loco Dios* (a keen study of monomania) we have the version entitled *The Madman Divine*.

Among the ultra-modern dramatists we have such figures as the Álvarez Quintero brothers (with their keen studies of modern life and its foibles); Jacinto Benavente (fondly called by some of his admirers the "Modern Shakespeare"); Gregorio Martínez Sierra; Manuel Linares Rivas; Eduardo Marquina; and Joaquín Dicenta (exponent of socialistic doctrines).

For poetry we turn to Juan Ramón Jiménez and Manuel and Antonio Machado; whereas critics and essayists are represented by Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Miguel de Unamuno, Manuel Bueno, Andrés González Blanco, and José Ortega y Gasset.

Many other authors we must omit so that we may pass on to the novel. But please bear in mind that just as the literary and artistic crescendo of the Golden Age was contemporaneous with a political and territorial diminuendo, so this renaissance of which we have been speaking has been progressing while the country has gone on losing colonial territory, and struggling with revolutions and counter-revolutions at home. If you stop to think about it, you will realize that this renaissance has been simply marvelous.

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

Spain could not have done it if she had been at heart the decadent nation that some of her critics declare her to be.

The Modern Novel

Valera has been credited with creating the Modern Spanish novel. You may ask how this can be when his first novel appeared in 1874, and at least two other writers had been doing good work before that date, i. e., the gifted Fernán Caballero (1796-1877), half Spanish, half German (née Carolina Böhl von Faber), whose first Spanish work, *La Gaviota*, appeared in 1848; and Pereda, whose *Escenas montañosas* appeared in 1864. Both these writers were realists in the good old Spanish sense, which they were reviving. But they did not found a school. Fernán Caballero was a keen observer of incidents and a skillful limner of pictures, but she was not so strong in character delineation, and was distinctly weak in construction of plots. Pereda, on the contrary, was a master at character delineation, but his characters are regional and he makes an excessive use of dialect and permits a polemical strain to color too much of his work. Therefore, his first great success was *Bocetos al temple*, which appeared in 1876, two years after Valera's *Pepita Jiménez*. In this same year (1876) Valera published his second great novel, *El Comendador Mendoza*, which in turn was followed in 1878 by *Doña Luz*.

It was the appearance of *Pepita Jiménez* in 1874 that awakened Spain, and the world, to a realization of what Spain could again accomplish in prose fiction, if she would return wholeheartedly to her native inspiration of more than regional interest. The author of it had proved himself a thorough-going realist of the good old Spanish type, and at the same time an idealist and a classicist.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

The literary descent of this awakening shows such names as the following:

Pérez Galdós, with his incredible gallery of more than five hundred portraits in the nearly fifty volumes of his *Episodios Nacionales*, giving in novelistic form the history of nineteenth century Spain; with his twenty-three volumes of *Novelas Contemporáneas*, seven volumes of *Novelas de la primera época*, and fifteen volumes of dramas;

Clarín, the critic, and author of *La Regenta*;

Palacio Valdés, with his stories of Andalucía and of Galicia (*José, Marta y María, La Hermana San Sulpicio*);

The Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán, with her fascinating *Cuentos de Marineda*, and her other naturalistic stories;

The brilliant champion of social reform, Blasco Ibáñez, with his keen studies of contemporary life in various parts of Spain (*La Barraca, Cuentos valencianos, Arroz y tartana, La Bodega, La Catedral, Sangre y Arena, El Intruso, La Horda, La Maja desnuda*);

And a host of minor writers of one good book each, as well as many even of the newest comers: Pío Baroja (with *Los Ultimos románticos*); Valle-Inclán (with *Flor de Santidad*); Martínez Ruiz (with *Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo*); and Valera's own son, Luis Valera, Marqués de Villasinda (at present Ambassador of Spain in Petrograd), who has already to his credit more than a half dozen novels (*El filósofo y la tiple, Visto y soñado, Del antaño quimérico, Sombras chinescas, Un alma de Dios, De la muerte al amor*).

With its long struggle for constitutional reform against the deeply entrenched special interests of the sovereign, the clergy, and the nobles; with its gradual passage from an absolute monarchy (which was a theocratic tyranny accompanied by the Inqui-

TO THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

sition) to a constitutional monarchy (with freedom of religious worship) led by an enlightened king who wishes to be king of all his people and not merely of a majority of them, the history of Spain in the nineteenth century is one of the most thrilling and romantic stories to be found in modern times.

As a knowledge of Spanish is the key that unlocks the door of this vast treasure-house of transcendently important and interesting materials, it would seem as though we had at hand a sufficient explanation of the importance of Spanish to the American citizen. But there is more to be said.

Spanish America

From the loins of this glorious Spain there have come eighteen sovereign and independent nations. The story of the discovery and conquest of the territory they occupy is one of the most amazing tales in all history. Their long, uphill struggle for independence has much in common with our own Revolution, and will therefore prove to be of very great interest to us in North America. Our affection for Washington and other Revolutionary heroes should endear to us Bolívar, O'Higgins, San Martín, Sarmiento, and others.

Since attaining their independence from Spain these countries have kept up a cordial relationship with the mother-land that parallels the cordiality that has existed between ourselves and the British Isles. While all of these nations have traits in common, due to their common origin, and common speech, their individualities are quite clearly delineated. It is of prime importance to us that we attain unto a wide and sympathetic knowledge of their political, social, economic, and spiritual ideals, their history, their art, their several literatures, their institutions, their constitutions: in short, their general culture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPANISH

Only after we shall have removed the "barrier of language" shall we be able to enter into that vital spiritual communion with our southern neighbors which will permit us to throw the united influence of the independent nations of the Western Hemisphere into those spiritual movements that hold out the most promise of an enduring peace throughout the three Americas.

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